



**KACHIN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION THAILAND**

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P.O.BOX 415, CHIANG MAI 50000, THAILAND

September 13, 2018

Statement on Myanmar's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day

**Human trafficking on China border can only be addressed by ending Burma Army offensives and war crimes**

On Myanmar's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day, KWAT urges Burma's government and the international community to recognize that without an end to Burma Army offensives and war crimes, the problem of human trafficking along the China border will never be solved.

KWAT has been assisting survivors of human trafficking for the past fifteen years, most of whom have been trafficked to China – some as far as east as the North Korean border. Most have been forced to marry and bear children for Chinese men, with others forced into sex work.

In this year alone, KWAT has already assisted about one hundred women who were trafficked to China, while we have learned of many others who have disappeared. Without knowing Chinese, and without legal papers, trafficked women face huge obstacles to return home.

Most of the trafficked women came from conflict affected areas of northern Burma, where the Burma Army resumed offensives against the Kachin in 2011, committing systematic war crimes, including mass destruction of villages, killing, torture and rape of civilians – as corroborated by the United Nation's Fact Finding Mission in their report on August 27.

The conflict has displaced over 120,000 people in northern Burma, who have been staying in over 170 IDP camps, where humanitarian aid has been cut by international donors, and increasingly restricted by the Burmese government and military in the past year – in violation of international law. With no other means of feeding their families, women of all ages have risked travelling to find work in China, where they are easy prey for trafficking gangs.

KWAT urges the Burmese government to immediately end Burma Army offensives and war crimes in northern Burma and the rest of the country, and begin unconditional, inclusive political dialogue with all ethnic leaders to enable a new federal, democratic constitution to be drawn up. We urge the international community to pressure the government to do this, through measures recommended in the Fact Finding Mission's report.

Without addressing the root causes, the human trafficking problem in Burma can never be solved.

We also call urgently on international donors to provide adequate humanitarian aid to internally displaced villagers in northern Burma. To avoid government restrictions, this aid must be provided cross-border through community-based channels.

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